

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3831

ANSWERED ON:09.08.2016

Consumer Courts

Ahlawat Smt. Santosh;Dev Km. Sushmita;Dubey Shri Nishikant ;Khadse Smt. Raksha Nikhil;Scindia Shri Jyotiraditya
Madhavrao;Shekhawat Shri Gajendra Singh

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Supreme Court appointed committee has identified certain discrepancies in the functioning of consumer courts including vacancies therein and sought urgent action to fix them and if so, the details thereof and the action taken thereon indicating the number of consumer courts presently functioning in the country and the number of vacancies reported therein along with the steps taken to fill up the said vacancies;
- (b) whether the Government proposes to set up more consumer courts in the States and if so, the details thereof indicating the names of States/UTs where such courts are proposed to be setup and the expenditure to be incurred thereon;
- (c) the number of cases registered, disposed and pending in the said courts during last three years and the current year, State-wise along with the steps taken to clear all the cases in a time bound manner;
- (d) whether the Government has put in place any monitoring mechanism to ensure smooth functioning of the courts and make them more accessible to the common people; and
- (e) whether the Government has taken note of the rising cost of litigation depriving poor people of the benefits of the system and the corrective steps taken in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
(SHRI C. R. CHAUDHARY)

(a) : The Supreme Court Appointed Committee has started functioning and presently it is assessing the problems faced by the Consumer Fora by holding discussions with the State Governments and the Presidents of the Consumer Fora.

There is one National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (National Commission), 35 State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions (State Commission) and 626 functional District Consumer Disputes Redressal Fora (District Fora) in the country. As per information available, the present vacancy position is as under:

No. Of vacancy of President	No. Of vacancy of Member
National Commission Nil	2
State Commissions	1 15
District Fora	104 297

Action has already been taken by the Central Government to fill up the two vacancies in the National Commission. The vacancies in the State Commissions and the District Fora are filled by the respective State Governments.

(b) : As per the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986, setting up of Consumer Courts in the States is the responsibility of the State Governments concerned.

(c) : As per the data compiled by the CONFONET (Consumer Fora Networking) system, the information on the number of cases registered, disposed and pending in the said courts during last three years and the current year, State-wise, is given in Annexure.

The following steps have been taken to clear the pending cases:-

- i. State Governments have been requested from time to time to take action well in advance for filling up of vacancies of President and Member and to maintain a panel of candidates for filling up of future vacancies also, to avoid delay in appointments.
- ii. Circuit Benches from the National Commission have been frequently visiting States.
- iii. Some State Commissions have constituted additional Benches mainly to dispose of backlog of pending cases.
- iv. The National Commission and some of the State Commissions are adopting the process of holding Lok Adalats for speedy disposal of the cases.
- (d) : As per the Consumer Protection Act, 1986, the National Commission has administrative control with regard to generally overseeing the functioning of the State Commissions and the District Fora to ensure that the objects and purposes of the Act are best served. The Central Government holds National Conferences and Regional Consultation meetings from time to time with the representatives of the State Governments and the Presidents of the Consumer Fora to resolve the impediments to improve the functioning of consumer fora.
- (e) : As per the rules framed under the Consumer Protection Act, 1986, the fees for filing cases in the Consumer Courts is minimal. For filing complaints of total value of goods or services and the compensation claimed up to rupees one lakh, the complainants

belonging to Below Poverty Line holding Antyodaya Anna Yojana Cards are exempted from payment of fees. Besides, the complainants can themselves plead their cases in the Consumer Courts.
